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ONI Contribution to NIE-27/1

Chinese Communist Capabilities and Intentions with Respect to Taiwan

1. The present strength of the Chinese Communist Naval Forces is shown in ONI Serial 114-S-51 which should be amended to change 7 motor-torpedo boats (PT) to 18. There is no firm indication of the location of any of these ships although all are believed to be in Chinese coastal waters.

The Chinese Communist Navy is untried and untested, but it is considered to be combat ineffective according to western standards.

2. By utilizing the maximum craft available to them, totaling approximately 610,000 tons, the Chinese Communists could undertake an initial life accommodating 200,000 troops, of which only about 60,000 would be carried in vessels other than junks. This would mean coordination of an operation of at least seven embarkation areas spread over about 1,000 miles of coast line. It would also mean that forces from the Shanghai-Hangchow area and Canton area probably would have to sail 24 to 48 hours in advance of forces departing from the Amoy and Foochow staging areas in order to bring a preponderance of force to bear against Nationalist positions. Although the extent of new construction is not known, reports continue to be received of the construction of landing craft in the area.

3. The gaps apparent in Chinese Communist naval capabilities are so great according to U.S. standards that they cannot be defined here. As to Russian capability to compensate for this deficiency there is no doubt that if the Russians desired they could compensate in large measure for the existing difficulties. It is not believed, however, that the USSR would intervene

to any appreciable degree because of the probability of identification of Soviet forces as such.

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4. Experience in the past several months with Sino-Soviet relations, however, indicates that Soviet aid to the Chinese Communists would not be limited only to planning, technical advice and logistic support, but may be expanded to to increase Chinese Communist capabilities in submarine and mine warfare. A limited number of Soviet submarines could be used offensively on a "volunteer" basis and could also be used for reconnaissance and the landing of special personnel.
5. Although a maximum Chinese Communist effort within the next few months could be mounted with 200,000 men from the consideration of water lift available, the lack of naval support, the certainty of detection, either from Nationalist-held off-shore islands or by U.S. aerial or sea patrols, the certainty of the intervention of the U.S. fleet and the difficulties to be encountered in reinforcement and resupply combine to make it doubtful that such an effort will come about. A further limiting factor would be weather considerations which are outlined in Appendix A of NIE-27.
6. The information provided in the ONI contribution to SE-20 relative to strength, disposition, composition and combat effectiveness of the Nationalist naval forces remains unchanged.
7. In spite of U.S. efforts to strengthen the Nationalist forces by means of MAAG, inefficiency, political intrigues, and lack of cooperation amongst the services serve to weaken the overall capabilities of the Nationalists.
8. As indicated above the political intrigues and manifest lack of cooperation amongst the various services combine to make it improbable that the Nationalists alone could successfully defend against a maximum Chinese Communist effort. Without direct Soviet participation in an attack, however, and given material and moral aid by the United States, the probability of a successful defense

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of Taiwan would be greatly enhanced. The presence of the U.S. Seventh Fleet and its active participation would be the decisive factor in such a successful defense.

9. Over-all Soviet policy is based on global considerations and at present undoubtedly takes into consideration such factors as the NATO situation, the Southeast Asia and the Middle East situations, the U.S. rearmament program and the situation in Korea. Consideration of such factors will influence any Soviet policy aimed at the invasion of Taiwan prior to mid-1952. If the Soviets were assured of a reasonable chance of success, or for reasons unknown to the U.S., felt that Taiwan must be taken prior to mid-1952, offensive action might be taken without regard to the above factors. The Soviets may also consider that such action might split the Western Powers and institute another war of attrition for the U.S. with slight effect on Soviet war potential. At the present time it is impossible to determine Soviet policy with regard to Taiwan except to state that Soviet policy does undoubtedly envisage eventual Chinese Communist control of Taiwan.

10. U.S. Far East naval forces were committed by the President to the defense of Taiwan for the duration of the Korean hostilities. Of all the foreign naval forces committed to the Far East, only the U.S. forces are considered available for the defense of Taiwan. Naval forces based at Okinawa would require at least one day to reach Taiwan. Naval forces engaged in the Korean operation would require at least two days to reach the area between Taiwan and the China coast. While availability of fleet units at the time is impossible to predict, it is considered that the Korean situation presently is such that the naval forces required could probably be made available immediately.

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11. At present there are no indications apparent to ONI which would show Chinese Communist intent to attack Taiwan. However, this situation, naval-wise, could change at any time. It is desired to point out, nevertheless, that while an all out attack does not at this time appear imminent there are other actions short of this course of action which the Chinese Communists might employ either to embarrass the U.S. internationally or to weaken the Nationalist position in Taiwan. Such actions might include airborne drops for sabotage and subversive purposes, a limited amphibious assault designed to embarrass the U.S. politically because of offensive naval action taken against it, as well as a combination of limited amphibious assault and airborne drop.

12. The Communists at all time will hope that they can eliminate U.S. commitments to Taiwan through political means and will seize upon every opportunity to exploit this possibility. If Taiwan were then left to its own resources the Communists could seize the island almost at will.

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